

## **REMARKS**

### **Status of Claims:**

Claims 1-53 were pending in the application. Claim 16 is hereby cancelled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, any subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-31 are now pending. Each of the pending claims defines an invention that is novel and unobvious over the cited art. Favorable consideration of this case is respectfully requested.

### **Disclosure Supporting the Instant Amendment:**

Claims 1, 17, and 29 are hereby amended to recite: "wherein said flush metal conductive circuitry forms interconnects from any via in the structure to any other via in the structure." This recitation comprises the subject matter of canceled claim 16. The instant amendment adds no new matter.

### **Allowable Subject Matter:**

Claims 16, 28, and 31 are deemed to be free of the prior art, but were objected to as depending from a rejected base claim. Claim 16 is hereby canceled and the allowable subject matter therein is hereby incorporated into Claims 1, 17, and 29. Claims 1, 17, and 29 have been, thereby, rendered allowable. The remaining claims are now allowable by virtue of depending from an allowable claim.

### **Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph:**

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2<sup>nd</sup> Paragraph, as being indefinite because various recitation of "dielectric layer" lacked proper antecedent basis..

Claim 17 is hereby amended to provide the required antecedent basis.

### **Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e):**

Claims 1-3, 5, 7, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Yano (6,419,149).

Claim 1 is now allowable in view of the incorporation of the allowable subject matter of Claim 16. Claims 2-15 are allowable in view of their dependence from an allowable claim.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):**

Claims 1, 3, 5-6, and 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asai (6,240,636) in view of Schmidt (5,457,881).

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yano in view of Hayashi (6,359,235).

Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yano in view of Takayama (5,977,783).

Claims 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asai in view of Schmidt and further in view of Hayashi.

Claims 17 and 19-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka (6,270,889) in view of Schmidt.

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka in view of Schmidt and further in view of Asai and Hayashi.

Claims 22-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka in view of Schmidt and further in view of Hayashi.

Claims 24-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka in view of Schmidt and further in view of Asai.

Claim 29 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka in view of Hayashi.

Claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kataoka in view of Hayashi and Asai.

Claims 1, 17, and 29 are now allowable in view of the incorporation of the allowable subject matter of Claim 16 into each of Claims 1, 17, and 29. The remaining claims are allowable in view of their dependence from an allowable claim.

**Conclusion:**

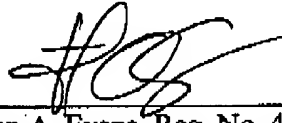
Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the foregoing amendments be entered, that the application as so amended receive an examination on the merits, and that the claims as now presented receive an early allowance.

If the Examiner believes that an interview would facilitate the prosecution of this case, Applicants urge the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The undersigned hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to deposit account no. 22-0185.

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Respectfully submitted,

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